Toronto metro

Your essential daily news | WEEKEND, APRIL 1-3, 2016 | High 12°C/Low 0°C Rain

THE BOYS ARE BACK

Blue Jays open season
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Spike in senior deaths on T.O. streets 'alarming'

TORONTO'S DEADLY STREETS

Average age of pedestrians killed in 2016: 70

Luke Simcoe
Metro | Toronto

Older pedestrians are dying on Toronto streets at an "alarming" rate, data compiled by Metro shows.

Of the 12 pedestrians killed so far in 2016, eight were seniors. The average age of all pedestrian fatalities this year is 70.

"Something needs to be done. We realize the next one could be any one of us," said Marie Smith of the United Senior Citizens of Ontario.

The latest death occurred Tuesday, when a 76-year-old woman was hit by a left-turning vehicle at Finch Avenue East and Skymark Drive. Police, who released details about the death Thursday, have not said if the 70-year-old driver will face charges.

A 2012 report from the Ontario coroner found people older than 65 accounted for 36 per cent of pedestrian deaths, despite accounting for only 13 per cent of the population.

This year's numbers are more than double that in Toronto.

"Our cities aren't designed for seniors," Smith said. "The speed limits aren't designed for us and neither are the crosswalks."

Joanne Banfield, head of the trauma prevention unit at Sunnybrook Hospital, called the spike in pedestrian deaths among seniors "alarming." She said a number of factors are behind the trend, including distracted driving and even vehicle design.

8

Of the 12 killed so far this year, eight were seniors.

There are more SUVs on the road, she said, noting higher vehicles pose a greater risk to pedestrians.

"Before, we used to see injuries like broken femurs," she said. "Now it's all internal organs. And when you're older you're not going to survive that."

Both Banfield and Smith said it's incumbent on the city to make streets more walkable for seniors, especially given the aging population across North America.

"Walking is so important for our health," Smith said. "So you're taking our driver's licences away, but you're not giving us anything back so that we can stay healthy and well."

Adina Lebo, head of the Toronto chapter of the Canadian Association of Retired Persons, said even little changes can make a big difference. She pointed to European cities that give pedestrians more time to cross the street if they hit the crosswalk button twice.

"Why can't we do that here?" she said.

Ultimately, Lebo said safer streets aren't just an issue for seniors.

"Think about a young mother trying to cross the street with a stroller and a toddler in tow. How fast is she moving?" she said. "When you design cities for older people, you're actually designing them for everyone"

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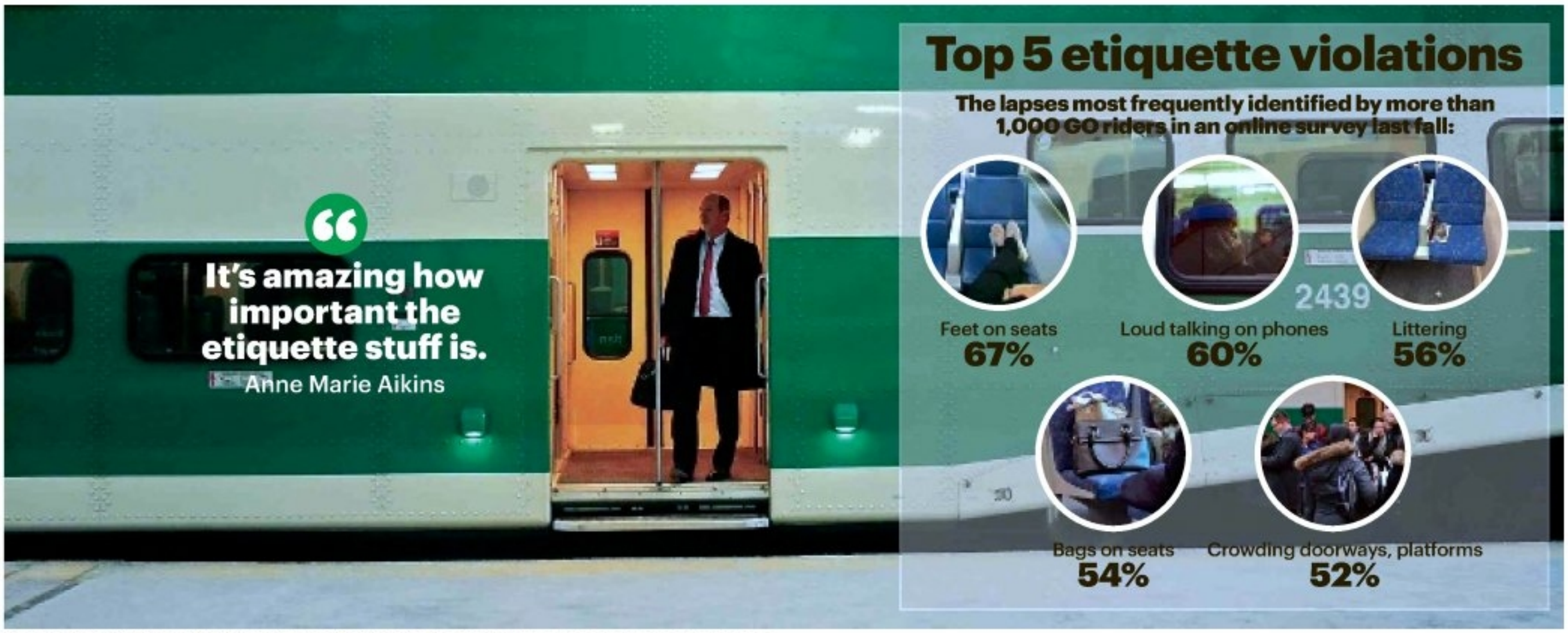
metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

Nintendo launches long-overdue foray into mobile with Miitomo. **Business**



A passenger waits on a GO train at Union Station on Wednesday. COLE BURSTON/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Rude conduct no-GO for riders

ETIQUETTE

GO Transit rolling out courtesy ad campaign

The stink eye, the hairy eyeball, the death stare. Call it what you will, that look of disgust is probably a commuter's best weapon when facing the kind of etiquette transgressions that can make a trip memorable for all the wrong reasons.

But GO Transit is trying to expand customers' artillery with a new courtesy campaign that discourages self-absorbed riders from the kind of rude conduct their fellow passengers find most irksome.

From loud talking to dirty feet on the seats, these lapses in decorum were the ones mentioned most in an open-ended, online survey of more than 1,000 GO riders last fall.

"It's amazing how important the etiquette stuff is," said Metrolinx spokeswoman Anne Marie Aikins.

"If people aren't following etiquette rules, it makes the trip memorable. (Riders) don't want it to be memorable," she said.

Even a little fun can rub some commuters the wrong way.

"We have some very humorous customer service associates and we get complaints about it. During March Break people will complain about noisy kids in the Quiet Zone," said Aikins.

Although they fell outside the top five beefs, commuters also sniffed at fellow passengers who eat stinky food on transit and those who wear too much perfume.

The courtesy campaign kicks off next week and will roll out over the next year with posters on GO vehicles and stations, videos and social media messaging including the hashtag #etiquettefail. Its cheeky approach is in the vein of an award-winning anti-smoking promotion called, "Quit the Denial." Instead of focusing on the health dangers of cigarettes, the ads equated smoking with other socially unacceptable behaviours — things like digging out ear wax.

"We're really using it to spark a conversation with people. The marketing world proves that the conversation (an ad) sparks is more successful in changing behaviour," said Aikins.

Most of the offences identified by GO riders won't get you a ticket even if an enforcement officer comes through your train, although littering and putting your feet on the seat are punishable by a fine.

What do you do when you're confronted by tactless behaviour? Aikins advises against open confrontation that can escalate.

She's been known to shush people when they're talking too loudly on their phones but admits that it's not very effective. They just return the stink eye, she said.

"You have to really decide what you're comfortable with," said Aikins.

"We're hoping this campaign will make it easier for people to talk to you about it by pointing to the sign. If you're with friends and they do it, I encourage you to talk to them about it.".

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

UEFA EURO CHAMPIONSHIP

Beer taps may open earlier

Gilbert Ngabo
Metro | Toronto

Lovers of booze and the beautiful game could be in for a treat this summer.

Council is considering a motion that, if passed, would let local bars and cafés start serving alcohol earlier than usual during this year's UEFA Euro championship.

The 24-team tournament runs June 10-July 10 in France. Due to the time difference, some games are scheduled to start as early as 9 a.m. Toronto time. That's two hours before the law allows alcohol to be served.

It's not the first time the city's made the move. The law was waived during the 2010 World Cup in South Africa and, more recently, the 2014 Sochi Olympics.

It's not really about beer.
Pat Pennman

Pat Pennman, co-owner of the Football Factory near Queen and Bathurst, is among those planning to take advantage this time around. Every weekend, his place is packed by 6:30 a.m. with soccer devotees following the English Premier League.

"It's not really about beer because people come in for the games," he said. "But we're in a free country. If someone wants to have a pint with their breakfast, let them make their own decision."

WHOOPEE CUSHION

Gag still big noise after 90 years

When it comes to practical jokes, the world famous Whoopee Cushion is a gas.

Believed to have been invented in Toronto around 1930 by the JEM Rubber Company and sold with the tagline, "It gives forth noises that can be better imagined than described," the classic gag has had audiences of all ages yucking it up for almost 90 years.

"Flatulence and fart jokes, in some ways, transcend time," Todd Coopee, an Ottawa-based toy historian, said on the eve of April Fool's Day, when Whoopee Cushions are sure to get a workout.

But the basic rubber bladder filled with air — known for releasing blush-inducing bathroom noises — had to convince customers the world was ready for gassy gags before it ever got a chance to trumpet its tooting tune.

ISTOCK

Stan Timm has studied the origins of the Whoopee Cushion and spilled the beans on how it came to be. After JEM Rubber realized the potential of its invention, he said, the company approached the S.S. Adams Company, an American distributor that was the undisputed joke, puzzle and magic-trick manufacturer on the continent. But Sorenson knocked the wind out of the product, pronouncing it "too indelicate." JEM then turned to the Johnson Smith Company, whose customers found the faux flatulation fantastic.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Why this protest is working

Taking inspiration from the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States, the Toronto branch formed in 2014 to show solidarity with Michael Brown — the unarmed black teenager shot by police in Ferguson, Mo. — as well as Jermaine Carby, who was shot by Peel police during a traffic stop weeks earlier.

Luke Simcoe
Metro | Toronto

The decision to stage a sit-in outside police headquarters has transformed Black Lives Matter Toronto from a moment into a movement, experts say.

The Toronto branch of Black Lives Matter formed in 2014. Since then, members have staged a "die-in" at Yonge-Dundas Square, crashed a Toronto Police Services board meeting and marched across the Allen Expressway.

But, only a few days after they staged a permanent sit-in outside police headquarters on March 20, they finally started getting traction at City Hall.

The encampment, which shows no signs of breaking up, was instrumental in getting Afrofest's two-day music permit reinstated. On Friday, city council will consider the group's call to reform the Ontario Special Investigations Unit, which investigates cases like that of Andrew Loku, a 45-year-old black man shot to death by police last July.

Plus, a number of local politicians, labour activists and school board trustees have expressed support for the movement.

Members of the Black Lives Matter Toronto sit-in continue their protest outside of Toronto Police Headquarters despite soggy conditions on Thursday. LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

> **We want to hold a place where anyone affected by it can come and talk and begin to heal.**
> **Desmond Cole**

"Their occupation has captured the public imagination," said Winnie Ng, the Sam Gindin Chair in Social Justice at Ryerson University.

Ng said the willingness of Black Lives Matter protestors to sleep outside in the cold during freezing rainstorms has shown others how committed they are to change.

"It's certainly in your face. There's no pretending like it's not happening," echoed Megan Boler, a University of Toronto professor who studied the Occupy Wall Street movement.

Similar to the way Occupy shed a light on "corporate malfeasance" in the United States, Black Lives Matter is making police racism difficult for the public to ignore, Boler said.

In particular, she highlighted activists' use of social media to share stories, images and videos of racial profiling by police in Toronto and elsewhere.

"Racism defines who gets heard and how things get heard," she said. "We're now able to show racism happening in a way that's very difficult for even the most powerful political institutions to dispute."

Desmond Cole, a writer and activist who's become one of the most visible faces of Toronto's anti-racism movement, said the success of Black Lives Matter Toronto is independent of whether the group's demands — including the release of the name of the officer who shot Loku — are met.

"Those demands are now in the hands of the people in power. If they're not met, it won't be the failure of the protestors. It will be a failure of the system that doesn't listen to its own people," he said.

Cole has spent a number of nights at the Black Lives Matter camp and said whatever happens, it's already a success.

"I see people who have never met before, and suddenly they're in the same place, talking and building bonds together. They're supporting each other and validating each other's stories and that's so valuable," he said.

Timeline of events

Nov. 25, 2014 — Over 3,000 people attend a candlelight vigil in Toronto in honour of Brown and Carby.

Dec. 13, 2014 — Some 200 protestors march to Yonge-Dundas Square where they stage a "die-in" to protest the killing of black men by police.

Feb. 5, 2015 — Working with the Art Gallery of Ontario, Black Lives Matter Toronto convenes a panel of young local black artists to discuss the work of Jean-Michel Basquiat.

July 5, 2015 — Andrew Loku, a 45-year-old black father of five, is shot to death by Toronto police. The shooting raises questions about how police interact with racialized communities and those with mental illness.

July 16, 2015 — Black Lives Matter Toronto members crash a police services board meeting to demand answers about the police killing of Andrew Loku.

July 27, 2015 — An estimated 150 protestors block traffic on the Allen Expressway during the evening commute in a further show of solidarity with Loku.

March 18, 2016 — The Ontario Special Investigations Unit announces it will not be charging the officer who shot Loku. The officer's name is not released.

March 20, 2016 — Black Lives Matter protestors begin their sit-in in front of police headquarters.

CORRECTION NOTICE

Please note that the Harry Rosen "Dress Shirt & Tie Event" creative that ran on March 31st, 2016 page 14, was printed in error. We apologize for any inconvenience this has caused.

HERE WE GO AGAIN

Jessica Smith Cross
Metro | Toronto

Congregants of the Church of Baseball will return to their pews Sunday for opening day. And, of course, the Blue Jays will be on the field in Tampa Bay. The Jays' remarkable season last year suggests there will be thousands of new fans this year. If you're among them, welcome. Here's some info to help you get up to speed.

Things you can say to pretend you know something about baseball

'Game 5 of the ALDS. That seventh inning.'

Say it in a reverent tone and try adding: "I've never seen anything like it in my life" (even if you didn't see it at all). It's a reference to the game that saw the Jays win the American League East Division Series last year and was, by all accounts, one of the best games of all time. It was chaotic — with a heartbreaking fluke of an error, an umpire's controversial call, players clearing the benches and Jose Bautista's game-winning three-run home run, which he celebrated with what's become known as The Bat Flip.

'Goose Gossage is the disgrace.'

Hall of Fame pitcher Rich "Goose" Gossage called Bautista a "disgrace to the game" last month over the bat flip. Gossage hails from baseball's old school and believes on-field showboating or "pimping" a home run is disrespectful to the game. By calling Gossage a disgrace, you're siding with Bautista who argues the celebratory attitude he and other Latin American players bring to the game is a reflection of the increasing diversity of baseball — and fans love it.

'Aaron Sanchez should stay in the rotation.'

If you read just one recent news story to prepare and state a firm opinion about it, that's a great start to actually being knowledgeable about baseball — not just sounding like it. Here is just one example. It's based on the news that Sanchez has been named a starting pitcher but is expected to be shifted to a reliever spot later in the season. If he pitches well, showing little sign of fatigue, should he keep his starting spot?

Storylines to watch

If you've been thinking about getting into baseball, now's the time.

This season has all the makings of a fantastic year for Toronto. Last season was the Jays' best in two decades, and many of the heroes — Jose Bautista, Josh Donaldson, Edwin Encarnacion, Kevin "Superman" Pillar and Marcus Stroman — are still on the team.

They're playing well in spring training, and there's no reason the team can't do as well, or better, this year — or we'll all suffer crushing disappointment. But that's baseball.

But here's where things get sticky.

The team's contracts with two of the three biggest bats — Bautista and Encarnacion — are up at the end of the season. There's a lot of fear among fans that the ownership won't pony up enough cash to keep the talent, and we'll end up back in playoff drought again.

Jose Bautista acknowledges the crowd after hitting a three-run home run. NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Words from the die-hards

"Overcoming obstacles and exceeding expectations is something I feel a lot in this team, and I'm really excited to see them this year. The Jays aren't underdogs anymore."
— Nicole Walton

"I went to a total of 35 games last season, including the playoffs, and this year it'll be around 40 games again. I'm most excited about making it to the World Series this year. You got to be optimistic."
— Mathew Tsang

"I'm thrilled to see what Marcus Stroman might be capable of over the course of a full season in the Blue Jays' starting rotation. If his late-season performance is indication of what's to come, Stroman is set up to do great things in 2016."
— Ian Hunter

Names to know

JOSH DONALDSON
was last year's MVP for an unreal performance at bat and on third base.

JOSE BAUTISTA
is the bat flipping, home-run hero. He's known as a guy with pride and principles.

KEVIN PILLAR
is known as Superman for his athletic jumping and diving catches in centre field.

RUSSELL MARTIN
is a Canadian catcher with a killer arm. His specialty is throwing out runners at second base all the way from home plate.

EDWIN ENCARNACION
is a powerhouse home-run hitter. Watch for him "walking the parrot," an odd tradition in which he lifts his right elbow as he rounds the bases after knocking one out of the park.

MARCUS STROMAN
stands five-foot-eight, and his catchphrase is "Height doesn't measure heart." He's young, talented and has a great attitude.

Encarnacion rounds the bases while "walking the parrot".
DARREN CALABRESE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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REFUGEES

Community groups urge minister to let them sponsor

Gilbert Ngabo
Metro | Toronto

Pressure continues to mount on the government not to scale down intake of Syrian refugees.

Hundreds of private sponsors from Toronto have sent handwritten letters to immigration minister John McCallum, pleading with him to continue processing applications with the same pace as the last six months.

The government had dismantled the urgent temporary operation after it had met the 25,000-refugee target at the end of February. Under pressure from sponsors and refugee advocates, McCallum announced any applications in the system by March 31 would be completed by the end of this year.

"That's still a long time for someone who is in trouble and needs to be rescued," said Bayan Khatib, a member of the Syrian Canadian Foundation. The group has sponsored a handful of families, but they were still working on more applications when the scaling-back started.

Khatib has sent in her letter too. She's currently trying to sponsor her uncle and his family and a number of cousins who've been displaced from Syria to Turkey, Jordan and Egypt. She's had to tell them the process may be stopped or delayed.

"They cried when I told them. My heart broke too," she said. "It doesn't make sense. People are willing to help. Why are you standing in their way?"

Bayan Khatib, left, with Lina Almahameed, a refugee who was sponsored by the Syrian Canadian Foundation. CONTRIBUTED

The Rosedale United Church has enough funds to sponsor 16 families, but they have only four of them so far. Its members argue quotas should not apply to privately sponsored refugees.

"Sponsors pay for almost everything," said church member Claude Hould, adding his group has three apartments currently sitting vacant because of the system's slowdown.

"It's starting to look like the way it was with the previous government. It's a big disappointment."

"People are willing to help. Why are you standing in their way?"
Bayan Khatib

EDUCATION

Students granted too much OSAP struggling to pay back

Ontario's post-secondary students have been overpaid more than $700 million in financial aid over a five-year period, the Star has learned.

Two major reasons: under-reporting of the student's income or the parents', and early withdrawal from studies. Annually, amounts overpaid to students have jumped from $139 million in 2010 to $179 million in 2014.

Former computer science student Josh Tate says he was "left scrambling" to repay a second overpayment he incurred accidentally, by boosting his income with a summer job. He says he learned of the problem long after the money had been spent. Barred from applying for more aid until the overpayment was reimbursed, he ended up having to take a semester off.

Gabrielle Ross-Marquette, of the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario, said OSAP "expects students to be fortune tellers" and forces them to guess their income well before they've earned it.

A ministry employee maintained there are no losses associated with overpayment, and should a student borrower default, the government will pursue their outstanding balance "indefinitely."

"Excessive loan funding" was flagged to the government in 2003, the year OSAP was last audited by the Auditor General.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

‘We can’t let those people die in vain’

TRAGEDY

Six adults, 3 kids killed in First Nation community fire

A First Nations chief says the deaths of nine people in a house fire on a remote northern Ontario reserve should spur the federal government to improve what he says are third-world conditions on dozens of reserves.

“We can’t let these people die in vain,” Isadore Day with the Chiefs of Ontario said Thursday.

“There should be a direct and immediate response to this situation. This is typical across all First Nations that are living in third-world conditions.”

A blaze that erupted in a family home late Tuesday night on the Pikangikum reserve killed six adults and three children.

Ontario Provincial Police said investigators and a stress team were in the community, but finding the cause of the blaze could take “a week or more.”

A fundraising page created by a community member identified the dead as Gilbert and Annette Strang, their daughter Faith, Faith’s husband Dietrich Peters and the younger couple’s three children — Ireland, 4, Aubree, 2, and eight-month-old Amber.

The Strangs’ son Gilbert and his wife Sylvia Peters also died in the fire, it said.

Previous inquests into similar tragedies have highlighted the challenges facing remote northern reserves such as Pikangikum.

Homes are dilapidated, not built to comply with any modern code and often don’t have running water, let alone a smoke detector. There are often several generations of families sharing a tiny bungalow, heightening the potential toll fires can take when they break out.

“Most homes are simply a death trap,” Day said.

Any fires spread quickly and communities are often woefully unprepared. Many don’t have fire trucks and rely on water trucks with no more pressure than a garden hose. If a community is lucky enough to have a fire truck, there are often not enough trained volunteers to operate it properly, inquests and internal government reports have found.

Day said more than 90 per cent of homes don’t have running water in Pikangikum.

Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett said Thursday the deaths underscore the need to improve living conditions on reserves. She said money in the recent federal budget will help improve the deplorable state of reserve housing. But she couldn’t say when a community such as Pikangikum could expect vastly improved living standards.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde of the Assembly of First Nations said the federal budget was a good start to make up for decades of neglect. Too many indigenous people are dying in fires that are completely preventable, he said.

“How many more deaths have to happen before action is implemented? It’s not acceptable in 2016.” THE CANADIAN PRESS

This photo posted to Faith Strang’s Facebook page shows her three children Ireland (standing in black), Aubree (standing holding a bottle), and Amber (in the green walker). Faith, the three children, and five other family members are believed to have been killed in a fire on the First Nations reserve in Pikangikum, Ont., on Tuesday. FACEBOOK.COM

CONTEST

Iconic Halifax Explosion Heritage Minute takes the crown

Vincent Coleman at the end of the Heritage Minute CONTRIBUTED

Yvette d’Entremont
Metro | Halifax

“Hurry! You’ve got to get these people out of here. That ship is going to blow,” an actor playing train dispatcher Vince Coleman breathlessly says during a heritage minute reenactment of the Halifax Explosion.

The Heritage Minutes series is an iconic Canadian tradition, providing short snippets of important moments in the country’s history. Vimy Ridge, Terry Fox, Superman, Laura Secord and Agnes MacPhail are among 82 varied videos that make up the series.

On March 31, the Halifax Explosion minute was crowned champion of the Heritage Minutes following Historica Canada’s #MinutesMadness Twitter contest.

Andrea Hall, communications spokeswoman for Historica Canada said the contest began March 7 as a lead-up to the 25th anniversary of the launch of the Heritage Minutes.

Each week viewers got to choose between a selection of videos. The contest garnered more than 2,000 votes. Voting closed at midnight Thursday.

The final two Heritage Minutes left standing were from Nova Scotia: the Halifax Explosion and the story of Viola Desmond challenging segregation in the province in the 1940s.

Desmond’s Heritage Minute defeated the Underground Railroad, while the Halifax Explosion short video beat Dr. Wilder Penfield, credited with “drawing the road map of the human brain.”

On Thursday morning, the Halifax Explosion video won over Viola Desmond with 62 per cent of the overall vote.

2,000

The contest brought in more than 2,000 votes

WOMEN’S RIGHTS

P.E.I. to allow access to abortions in province

Prince Edward Island has agreed to provide abortions within the province by the end of the year, ending decades of forcing women to travel to neighbouring provinces to access the procedure.

The Island’s Liberal government announced Thursday it will not fight a legal challenge launched in the province’s Supreme Court by the group Abortion Access Now, which says the province has an obligation to provide safe abortions under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

PEI is the last province in the country to allow abortion access within the province, 28 years after the 1988 Morgentaler decision of the Supreme Court struck down laws restricting abortion in Canada.

Women from the Island must currently travel to New Brunswick or Nova Scotia to get abortions paid for by the Island government.

The group that launched the recent lawsuit said Thursday’s announcement was the culmination of years of relentless lobbying for change.

> **Today is a good day for equality rights in P.E.I.**
> Abortion Access Now

Health Minister Robert Henderson said Health PEI has been told to develop plans for a women’s reproductive health centre somewhere on the Island. He says it should be in place by the end of the year.

He said the new centre, to be located within a hospital, will offer a range of services including counselling.

The P.E.I. Right to Life Association panned the change in policy and said it will continue to provide public education in opposition of abortion.

In a statement, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau applauded the announcement.

“The Government of Canada reaffirms its belief that a woman should have access to reproductive health services, no matter where they live in our country,” Trudeau said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Court rules Vice must give up background material

A Canadian news outlet must give the RCMP background materials used for stories on Farah Shirdon, a suspected terrorist, despite the reporter’s objections, a judge has ruled. The Vice stories in 2014 were based on conversations Ben Makuch had with Shirdon via an online instant messaging app called Kik Messenger. RCMP want access to screen captures of those chats. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Economy kicks of 2016 with strong growth

The Canadian economy kicked off 2016 by rocketing higher, raising hopes for better-than-expected growth this year.

Real gross domestic product rose 0.6 per cent in the first month of the year, boosted by manufacturing, retail trade and the oil and gas sector, Statistics Canada reported Thursday. The result was twice the 0.3 per cent that economists had expected for the month.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Architect Zaha Hadid dead at 65

Irene Kuan
Metro | Toronto

World-renowned British-Iraqi architect Dame Zaha Hadid, best known for her design of the London Aquatic Centre, has died after suffering a heart attack in Miami. She was 65.

"It is with great sadness that Zaha Hadid Architects have confirmed that Dame Zaha Hadid died suddenly in Miami in the early hours of this morning," according to a statement from her company.

Born in Baghdad, and based in the U.K., Hadid was perhaps the most famous female architect in the world, and was the first female recipient of many top industry awards, including the 2004 Pritzker Architecture Prize.

In 2015, she became the first solo female winner in 167 years to receive the Royal Institute of British Architects' Gold Medal.

Known as a true 'Starchitect,' a term given mostly to male architects, her innovative and futurist structures can be seen all over the world.

Queen Elizabeth honoured her with 'Dame' status in 2012.

Hadid's larger-than-life career faced many obstacles, in an industry that's still known to be male-dominated and often unfavourable to women. She frequently spoke about the prejudices she faced as a female architect.

"Starchitect" Zaha Hadid
AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Greek lawmakers ready to OK migrant deportations

LEGISLATION

Over 50,000 stranded at border with Macedonia

Lawmakers in Greece were ready to support legislation to deport refugees back to Turkey as clashes between migrants persisted Thursday at overcrowded detention camps.

A three-hour fight broke out overnight between groups of migrants camping out in Greece's main port of Piraeus, leaving eight people injured and requiring treatment at nearby hospitals.

The clashes, believed to have been between Afghan and Syrian migrants, left the area strewn with rocks and broken glass. New protests were also reported at detention camps on the Greek islands of Lesbos and Chios, from where deportations to Turkey are due to start next week.

More than 50,000 refugees and migrants have been stranded in Greece after Balkan countries closed their borders to the massive flow of refugees pouring into Europe. Some 11,500 remain camped out at the border with Macedonia, ignoring instructions from the government to move to organized shelters. Hundreds of those camping out in Piraeus were boarding buses Thursday for newly created refugee camps elsewhere in Greece.

Government officials described the violence as minor.

In Athens, the government submitted draft legislation required for the landmark migration agreement reached this month by the European Union and Turkey to take full effect. The deal aims to break the smuggling rings that have brought hundreds of thousands of people from Turkey across the Aegean Sea to Greece.

Due to be voted on late Friday, the bill would upgrade Greek asylum services and set conditions for refugees and migrants to be sent back to Turkey from the Greek islands.

The returns are to start Monday, but most support staff promised by other EU countries have still not arrived on Greek islands, and the method of how to return the refugees is still being negotiated between the EU, Turkey and Greece.

Turkey's prime minister said the deal with the EU will go into effect as scheduled on Monday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Due to be voted on Friday, the bill would set conditions for refugees and migrants to be sent back to Turkey from the Greek islands. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

INDIA

Overpass collapse kills dozens

A long section of a road overpass under construction collapsed Thursday in a crowded Kolkata neighbourhood, with tons of concrete and steel slamming into midday traffic, leaving at least 21 people dead and scores of others injured in the Indian city, police said.

Rescuers used saws, small cranes and their bare hands to dig through the wreckage in search of survivors.

At least 21 people were killed, a police official said on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media. It was not immediately clear how many people remained missing.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

UN plagued by sex abuse allegations

The United Nations on Thursday announced 108 new alleged victims of sexual abuse, the vast majority of them minors, by peacekeepers in Central African Republic, and it called "shocking to the core" a report that three girls said a French military commander forced them to have sex with a dog.

The revelations widened the scope of a sexual abuse scandal that has persisted for months.

The allegations, dating from 2013 through last year, were first announced by a U.S.-based advocacy group, AIDS-Free World, late Wednesday.

UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric on Thursday told reporters that the UN can't confirm the allegations involving a dog at this point.

AIDS-Free World said Wednesday night that 98 girls in Central African Republic had reported being sexually abused between 2013 and 2015 by perpetrators who have left the country.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

POLITICS

Trump backtracks on abortion

Donald Trump is fighting to convince a skeptical Republican Party he can improve his standing among women, even as he takes back an explosive comment about abortion and attacks the credibility of a female reporter police say was illegally grabbed by the billionaire's campaign manager.

It took Trump's campaign just hours to backtrack on Wednesday after he said that should abortion become illegal, women who undergo the procedure should face "some sort of punishment." The plan sparked a backlash, prompting Trump to release two statements clarifying his position. His second statement said only those who perform abortions would be "held legally responsible, not the woman."

"The woman is a victim in this case as is the life in her womb," Trump said.

The flap comes as Trump works to hold off a challenge from chief rival Sen. Ted Cruz in Wisconsin's high-stakes primary next Tuesday.

A big loss for Trump in Wisconsin would reduce his chances of securing the delegates he needs to clinch the party's nomination. It could also offer new hope to rival Ted Cruz and outside groups that see Trump as a threat.

Trump, however, still maintains a lead in the delegate count and with a win in Wisconsin, his grasp on the party's presidential nomination could be unbreakable. Delegates pledged to candidates are elected in state primaries and then vote for the party's nominee at the national convention in July.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

VIRGINIA

State trooper shot dead at Greyhound bus station

Virginia State Police say a trooper has died after a shooting at a Greyhound bus station in Richmond.

Virginia State Police Superintendent Col. Steven Flaherty says the trooper, Chad Dermyer, died Thursday after being shot multiple times.

State Police have said two civilians were also shot at the terminal.

The gunman was shot dead by two other troopers. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nintendo goes mobile

TECHNOLOGY

Revenue from mobile gaming surpassing consoles

After a promising launch in Japan, Nintendo's long-overdue foray into mobile is set for a much wider test.

The Japanese electronics maker's free to download Miitomo mobile app for iOS and Android went live in the U.S. Thursday. Nintendo says Miitomo is also available in numerous other counties including Canada and in several languages.

While Nintendo remains committed to the video console business it has a powerful impetus for branching out given that Candy Crush maker King and others have demonstrated that a single mobile game franchises can generate billion-dollar annual sales.

Industry research firm Newzoo estimates that mobile gaming revenue hit $30 billion (U.S.) last year, surpassing console gaming at $26.4 billion. Newzoo says while growth has cooled in North America and Europe, it remains explosive in Asia.

Nintendo is partnering with Tokyo Internet firm DeNA to develop and operate new game apps based on Nintendo's intellectual property, including its iconic game characters, for use on nearly ubiquitous mobile devices.

"With Miitomo, Nintendo takes its first step into the world of smart devices," said Scott Moffitt, Nintendo of America's executive vice president of sales and marketing.

Nintendo says the app was downloaded a million times in the first three days in Japan after its release on March 17, ranking as the most downloaded free app on both the App Store and Google Play.

The company, however, is playing catch up in the increasingly crowded mobile game space and its in app purchase strategy is unlikely to make up for a lack of paid app revenue in the early stages.

But analysts said the mobile offering could bring back players who migrated away from games on the company's dedicated hardware, such as the Wii and handheld DS devices.

"This should remove any doubts about the Nintendo brand's relevancy in the smartphone age," said Jefferies analyst Atul Goyal.

The family-friendly games maker plans to launch four more mobile games by the end of 2017 that will also be free to download.

Unlike Miitomo, future titles will include some of Nintendo's most popular characters and the company has promised to bring hits like Super Mario Bros. to mobile phones and tablets. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

> **With Miitomo, Nintendo takes its first step into the world of smart devices.** Scott Moffitt

Nintendo is partnering with Tokyo Internet firm DeNA to develop and operate new game apps based on Nintendo's intellectual property, including its iconic game characters. CONTRIBUTED

GAMING

What's next?

Nintendo will always be beloved by gamers for its unique take on gaming. Here's a look at their main products and what might be coming next:

1 **3DS** — The DS line of products have sold more than 200-million units, but sales have declined over the past four years. It was the dominant portable system, and while beloved franchises and characters still sell well, it's facing huge competition from smartphone gaming, where the prices of games are a fraction of the price.

2 **Wii U** — Nintendo's latest home console has struggled ever since it launched, and just never captured the sales lightning of its predecessor, the Wii. However, most fans are already looking toward what's coming next.

3 **Mobile** — Miitomo is the first game out of Nintendo's partnership with DeNA, the first Japanese mobile game company that it's partnered with. The plan is to create new games based on the company's characters, but not release versions of older console games.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Free tax software best for simple returns: Expert

With tax season upon us, some Canadians may be exploring new options for filing their returns this year.

Should you hire an accountant? Or do them yourself on a computer or on paper? Experts say the answer to that question depends on how complicated your financial situation is and how comfortable you are with taking on the task.

Last year, the Canada Revenue Agency received 23.4 million (81 per cent) electronic returns compared with 5.4 million (19 per cent) paper returns. It notes that the number of people filing their personal tax returns electronically, either on their own or via a tax professional, has been steadily increasing over the past five years.

If filing over the computer doesn't appeal to you, filers can still go the free route if they go to one of the free temporary volunteer-run tax preparation clinics across the country aimed at those with low to moderate incomes.

Dale Romanovsky, a chartered professional accountant, says free tax help and free software can help filers save money but it's really most beneficial for those with simple returns. Those who have more complicated filings — for example, different streams of income, foreign property or a small business — should consider seeking in-person, professional help.

"If their return is pretty simple, (they're) just earning employment income, then the software should be manageable," he said.

"But once you have complexity, investment income, business income — there are a lot of planning opportunities … and decisions that you should be making when doing the return," he said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

market minute

DOLLAR	77¢ (–0.13¢)
TSX	13,494.36 (–9.62)
OIL	$38.34 US (+2¢)
GOLD	$1,235.60 US (+$7)

NATURAL GAS: $1.959 US (–3.7¢)
DOW JONES: 17,685.09 (–31.57)

metro VIEWS

Your essential daily news **SCIENCE SAYS** Weekend, April 1-3, 2016

R.I.P. LAUNDRY? A fabric with silver and copper nanoparticles can clean itself when exposed to light.

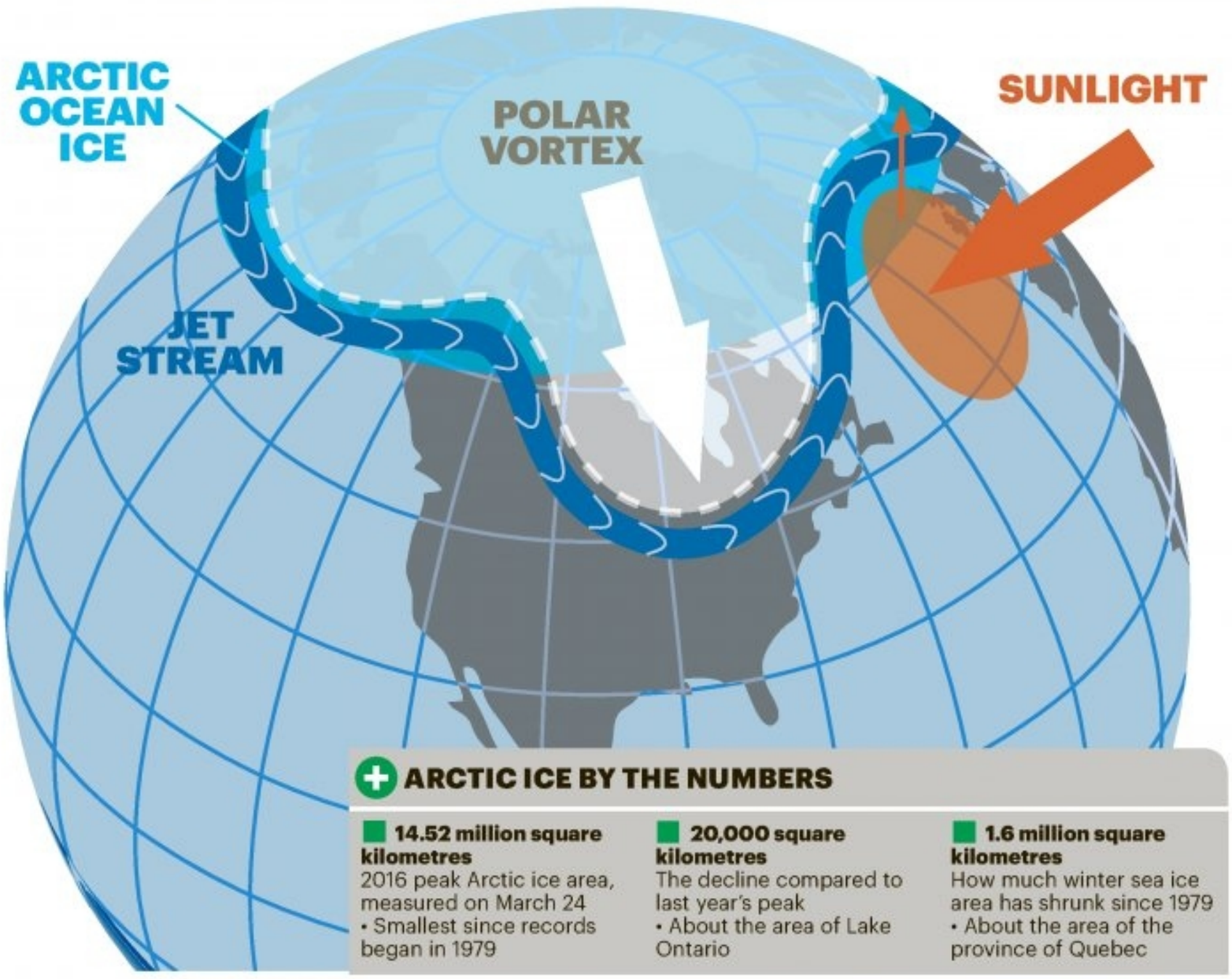
DECODED Climate shocker

NOW GLOBAL WARMING MAKES THINGS COLDER

The polar ice cap is the smallest we have ever seen it. Each winter, the vast arena of ice that covers the Arctic Ocean reaches a peak area big enough to cover all of Canada and about half the United States. This year is different. The ice's peak size is the smallest it's been in the 37 years we've measured it. Climate change is here, and **we could be in for some wild weather.**

WHAT'S GOING ON?
Scientists believe sea ice helps keep the circling mass of cold air we call the **polar vortex** close to the North Pole.

- As global average temperatures have climbed, the **Arctic Ocean ice** has shrunk. Arctic temperatures were 5.5 to 8.3 C above normal this season.
- With less ice to reflect **sunlight**, the ocean absorbs it.
- This triggers changes to pressure and temperature and causes the **jet stream** to wander and wobble.
- The result? Frigid **polar vortex** air travels south, unleashing cold snaps like the one expected in the next few days from Manitoba to the Maritimes. Brr!
- A meandering **jet stream** is also a recipe for extreme weather events like Hurricane Sandy.



ARCTIC ICE BY THE NUMBERS

14.52 million square kilometres
2016 peak Arctic ice area, measured on March 24
• Smallest since records began in 1979

20,000 square kilometres
The decline compared to last year's peak
• About the area of Lake Ontario

1.6 million square kilometres
How much winter sea ice area has shrunk since 1979
• About the area of the province of Quebec

GRAPHIC: ANDRÉS PLANA/METRO

CITIZEN SCIENTIST by Genna Buck

I can't keep up — now, any alcohol is bad for me?

What, now even one or two drinks a day is unhealthy? I'm so sick of conflicting health advice! — Felicia, Vancouver

Dear Felicia,

Believe me, as a boxed-wine aficionado, I'm upset about this too. An analysis out of the University of Victoria this month looked at 87 past studies about the relationship between drinking alcohol and rates of death from any cause. It cast doubt on years of evidence suggesting people who enjoy one or two drinks per day have lower rates of heart disease, diabetes and death than those who never drink at all. (That's *premature* death. The lifetime risk of death is 100 per cent). Here's the problem: 73 of these studies didn't sort the participants properly. Abstainers (people who don't drink and never have) were frequently lumped into the "non-drinkers" category along with people who currently abstain, but used to drink.

And why do people quit drinking? Often because of health problems or old age. Light drinkers misleadingly appear healthier in comparison.

After adjusting the data for that, there was little difference in death rates between light drinkers and teetotallers. Light drinkers are at higher risk of cancer death, but a lower risk of heart disease.

This is one paper, not the final word on the topic. But it shows the need to be careful interpreting observational studies of health outcomes at a big-picture, population level; so many variables are at play that it's hard to account for them all.

Here's what we do know: Any benefits of alcohol disappear above one or two drinks a day, and drinkers knocking back four or more risk addiction, serious health problems and early demise. But for most, light drinking is low-risk. I'll raise one or two glasses to that.

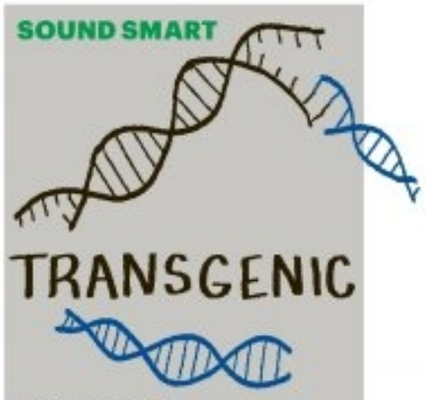
Science Question? Tweet @genna_buck

FINDINGS
Your week in science

FACE FACTS
Ohio State University researchers say just one facial expression is universal: the "Not Face." Wherever you are in the world, the crinkled brow, thin lips and raised chin mean, "I do not agree."

ZOOMED IN ON ZIKA
Images taken with a powerful cryo-electron microscope show the sugar molecules on the outer shell of the Zika virus are in a different place than on similar viruses such as dengue. Purdue University biologists believe those sticky sugars may play a role in how Zika latches onto brain cells.

SOUND SMART



DEFINITION
Transgenic living things have been engineered to contain genes from a different species. **Transgenic is a more accurate term than "genetically modified."**

USE IT IN A SENTENCE
"Marco spent all day in the grocery store looking for cereal that is not **transgenic** — he doesn't know overwhelming evidence shows transgenic foods are perfectly safe to eat."

PHILOSOPHER CAT
by Jason Logan

Philosopher cat now at www.mymetrostore.ca

metro Your essential daily news

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Your essential daily news
MOVIES MUSIC TELEVISION DIGITAL

Linklater goes for the raunch

FILM

Newest film set in 1980, before the cultural backlash

Richard Crouse
For Metro Canada

Writer/director Richard Linklater, maker of Boyhood and The Before Trilogy, poses for pictures in Toronto. His new film Everybody Wants Some!! is a "spiritual sequel" to his early hit Dazed and Confused. VINCE TALOTTA/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Richard Linklater's new film Everybody Wants Some!! is set in that sweet spot between Saturday Night Fever and the Reagan Years.

Ripe with feathered hair, bell bottom pants and milk crates used as LP storage, it's the story of college life over the course of one weekend in 1980 set to the throbbing beat of disco and new wave music.

"It was a raunchy time," says Linklater. "It was pretty hedonistic. Sex, drugs and rock and roll. I had to impose that back on my cast.

"Disco was sex. Dancing was foreplay. You were hoping to keep it going and that it would get personal. The humour was really raunchy. It was not innocent but there was a certain kind of playfulness to it."

The 55-year-old director calls the 1980s "a good time for me. A good time to be in your twenties. I was that guy who took his album collection and his music and his speakers off to college. My entire net worth at that age was in music."

"You do a movie to examine your feelings or what you think," he says. "I thought a lot about my own life at that time and also the culture. It's my little anthropological look (at 1980).

"I came out of it thinking that was the end of something. The eighties got much more serious. There was the AIDS epidemic but also there was the cultural backlash. There was the Reagan administration, Pat Robertson, (Jerry) Falwell and it's kind of a war and not only a war on drugs.

"They were trying to move the culture back to the fifties or some mythical past before all this corruption, i.e. the freedoms of the sixties, women's liberation. That was really in full gear by '82, '83 so I look at this and think, this was the last time there was that unabashed, raunchy hedonistic pure fun.

"I look at it and go, that was a good time to be young because that was all going to change."

The Texas-born filmmaker says he spent his '80s college years underground, immersed in punk rock. "It was getting kind of ugly in accepted culture so I zoned out a lot of it."

Since then he has made a career chronicling contemporary suburban culture in films like Slacker, Dazed and Confused and most recently in the twelve-years-in-the-making Boyhood.

Along the way he's learned a thing or two about how society is changing.

"I think the culture has actually changed less and less," he says.

"I observed that on Boyhood. I thought the world would look a lot different in those twelve years. If you take 1969 to 1981 you got a lot of different looks, cars, everything. In Boyhood nothing changed. The phones changed but the cars all looked the same, the hairstyles.

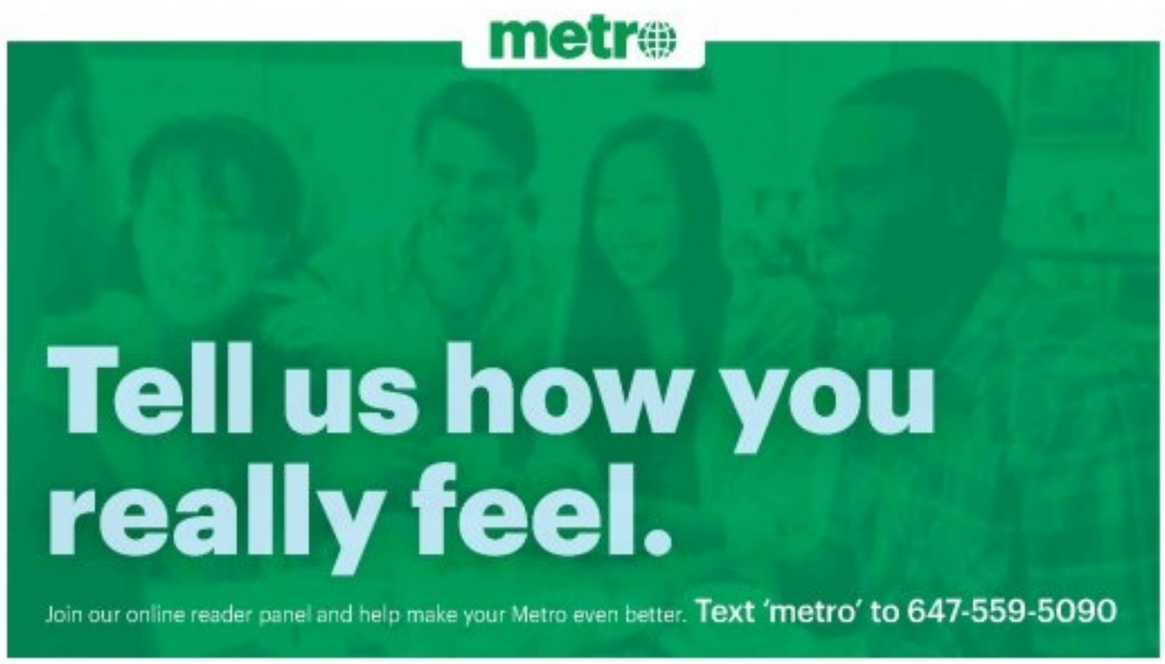
"I think we've hit a wall. Technology is so quick moving that it satisfies that desire in us for change. Punk comes out of (the idea) that I want something new.

"I don't think humans feel that deep need for demonstrable rejection of the old and embracing of the new because they feel there is so much being satisfied technologically. Whatever urge that was to stick a safety pin in your cheek and go create a new dance, you don't see that anymore."

MOVIE RATINGS by Richard Crouse

Midnight Special ★★★★
Everybody Wants Some!! ★★★★

HOW RATING WORKS
★★★★ SEE IT
★★★ WORTHWHILE
★★ UP TO YOU
★ SKIP IT



YOUR MONEY
NEVER STOPS
EARNING

DEBIT

Joel Edgerton, Michael Shannon, Jaeden Lieberher and Kirsten Dunst in Midnight Special.
BEN ROTHSTEIN/COURTESY WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT/TNS

The faith and fear of being a parent

MIDNIGHT SPECIAL

Jeff Nichols talks anxiety, ambivalence in sci-fi road film

Richard Crouse
For Metro Canada

In the films Take Shelter and Mud, director Jeff Nichols explored themes of social anxiety caused by fear of the unknown. When I suggest that his new movie, Midnight Special — a sci-fi road film about a father and a son with special powers — continues that examination, he agrees, but only to a point.

"I certainly think you could make that statement and it would be fair," he says, "but it doesn't exactly line up with what I was thinking.

"I was thinking about what it is to be a parent. I think being a parent is to have faith in the unknown. You don't know what your children are going to grow up to be. You don't know what's going to happen to them. You don't know if they are going to make it all the way. You have to have faith in who they can be, who they are developing into. Who they are currently. I think that is what parenthood is and I think that is why there is so much fear and anxiety that comes from being a parent."

Nichols says he originally came up with the idea for a "sci-fi government chase film" but adds, "That could be really silly, so I think it is up to me as a filmmaker to apply these kind of personal feelings I have and my relationships to the locations and to the world at large to try to ground this film and give it some kind of actual purpose."

To complete the picture, Nichols cast Michael Shannon as the father. A frequent collaborator, Shannon has starred in all of Nichols' films, including the upcoming Loving.

"I think he makes me a better writer, especially in a film like Midnight Special where I'm trying to reduce the need for backstory to be delivered through monologues. When you have a person like Mike, he fills all the spaces between the lines with all that subtext. He carries it on his face, in his countenance. He is the complete story and he doesn't even have to say a word."

Midnight Special is the extraordinary kind of sci-fi movie that teases out the information bit by bit. We learn enough to stay involved and are treated to several spectacular and exciting scenes along the way, but when it comes time to put a period on the story, Nichols instead uses an ellipsis in a metaphysical ending that will mean different things to different people. It owes a nod to his old hero Stephen Spielberg but feels distinctly like a Jeff Nichols film.

> **I think my films point toward hope but don't fully embrace it.**
> Jeff Nichols

"If you look at ET and the bicycle flying and all these other moments that are classic moments in Spielberg films, they are wonderful. I don't do that. For better and for worse, I don't do that. Maybe it's because I live in the modern age and am a bit more of a pessimist. I don't consider myself a cynic. I like films that ultimately are hopeful, but there is a different kind of conclusion in my films than his films. I think my films point toward hope but don't fully embrace it. I think that is the difference. It could also be the difference between a blockbuster and whatever this is going to be, but that is who I am as a person."

THE TV DINNER JESSICA ALLEN

Make no mistake: Harrison wasn't simply a gruff glutton — although he did suffer from gout, and he sure did love to drink

I was going to write about why you should go see The Lobster, a beautifully odd film that has a 92 per cent score on Rotten Tomatoes, instead of Batman v. Superman, which brought in $424.1 million internationally last weekend despite its dismal 29 per cent rating.

But I'm not in the mood to be patronizing, at least not today, because Jim Harrison has passed away. He wrote poetry, fiction, and nonfiction, the latter of which has meant a great deal to me.

You might know Harrison as the author of Legends of the Fall, a novella he wrote in 1979 that was adapted into a Hollywood film starring Brad Pitt and Anthony Hopkins in 1994.

But "Mr. Harrison was also known for his essays on food," the New York Times wrote on Sunday of the 78-year-old who died on Saturday. "He was perhaps the leading exponent of the small sub-genre in which shotguns and shoe leather play a far greater role than balsamic reduction."

Make no mistake: Harrison wasn't simply a gruff glutton — although he did suffer from gout, and he sure did love to drink: his definition of a glass of wine with dinner meant a 16-ounce pour.

Harrison was a true Epicurean, where "a simple brunch of leftovers" might include "a pasta made from Swiss chard, fresh tomatoes, and copious garlic, and a duck leg and thigh."

Existentialism, after all, requires a healthy appetite.

"I get real tired and hungry trying to figure out the nature of existence, the nature of nature, and the apparent stillness at the heart of being," he wrote.

I fell hard for the way Harrison described living — in between stuffing truffles into a woodcock he'd shot and dinners with Jack Nicholson or Orson Welles — in his nonfiction, which has been called misogynistic.

But discoursing on nature, sex, art, food, death and the hows and whys behind why the hell we're here, transcends gender, if you ask me.

He did this often during hunting expeditions at his cabin in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, where he'd prepare both simple and lavish meals with his best friends, Montana-based painter Russell Chatham (Nicholson collects his art) and the Frenchman Guy de la Valdene. What I would've done to have pulled up a chair to that table.

The cabin is also where Harrison, whose wife of 55 years, Linda, passed away in October, sought solitude during depressive bouts. He was like a modern-day Thoreau, whom he quoted often — along with references to Buddha, Rilke, and Chinese poets — in the way he chronicled his observations of nature, which was never convoluted.

Mostly, he was in awe of it: the small feeling you get under a night sky, thick with dark and stars.

And then there was food: "On my deathbed I will not care how I looked in the mirror, or to others, for that matter," he wrote 25 years ago in an essay called One Foot in the Grave, "but I will rehearse with pleasure the tablespoon dipping inaudibly into the kilo of beluga."

I can't afford caviar but I did have a bone-in cooked ham, which I glazed with a slick paste of apricot preserves, Dijon mustard and thyme, and served alongside scalloped potatoes and a simple cabbage salad.

We watched Legends of the Fall and argued over who'd seen it more times. It sure is clunkier than I remember.

But that wasn't Harrison's fault.

(And let's not blame Brad.)

I cried all the same.

THE MOVIE: Legends of the Fall

THE MEAL: Bone-in cooked ham

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NEW FILM

For con man, lying is just a way of life

The movie Thank You for Calling is based on the exploits of French-Israeli con man Gilbert Chikli, who would pretend to be a CEO or intelligence agent. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The man who nearly stole over 70 million euros from France's business and banking elite is a serial manipulator who sees fraud not as a crime but as a way of life, according to those behind a new film based on the con artist's exploits.

Je Compte sur Vous — released in English under the name Thank You for Calling — is based on the exploits of the French-Israeli Gilbert Chikli, who engineered rogue payments by phoning companies and pretending to be the firm's CEO or a French intelligence agent. Those behind the film, which was released in France on Dec. 30, describe Chikli as a chameleon of a man, a brazen charmer whose boasts suggest he has yet to abandon his criminal career.

"Chikli is an unstoppable seduction machine," said director Pascal Elbe in a recent interview in Paris. "For him it's a job; it's definitely not a con."

Chikli's heists were astounding in their daring. With a little background research and a well-placed phone call, Chikli could cajole or bluster his way into organizing the transfer of several hundred thousand, a million or even millions of euros to bank accounts in Dubai, Russia, China or Hong Kong.

His victims put down the phone convinced they were speaking to their boss or to a genuine French spy. One spoke of being taken in by a man with "an extremely powerful tone of voice and self-assurance." Two more were convinced — somehow — to withdraw cash and hand-deliver it to bars in Paris. When tricks or charm didn't work, Chikli turned to bullying; another employee was threatened with losing her job if she didn't immediately organize the transfer of nearly $2 million to the U.K.

"He adapts to his interlocutor; that's what's crazy," Elbe said. "He improvises. He reacts. He riffs off what you're saying and gives you back what you want to hear."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fans and critics clash over latest superhero movie

BATMAN V SUPERMAN

Blockbuster reaction shows widening gap

Richard Crouse
For Metro Canada

Rotten Tomatoes gave Batman v Superman a lukewarm 29 per cent rating while taking in $166.1 million in the North American box office. HANDOUT

Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice didn't do well with critics, but was a giant hit with fans. The New Republic called it an "indigestible, posturing, two-and-a-half-hour mope-fest," while Time Out blasted it, calling it "a $250 million tombstone for a genre in dire need of a break."

In my written review I gave it an unenthusiastic two out of five star rating, describing it as "essentially a long trailer for the next DC superhero ensemble movie tagged on to a WrestleMania style smack down." On my regular Canada AM review segment I joked it should have been subtitled Yawn of Justice.

About four seconds after I wrapped my television review the first of many tweets and Facebook responses started cluttering up my social media pages. I'd detail them all individually, but most of them were variations on this one from Frank in Nova Scotia: "@RichardCrouse good thing #DawnOfJustice was made for fans and not critics. These are usually the good ones. Can't wait to see it."

I hope Frank liked the movie. I suspect he was part of the opening weekend's overwhelmingly male demographic — 66 per cent of the audience were male, 63 per cent between the ages of 18 and 34 — who flocked to the film. Also, his twitter cover page shows Superman shooting lasers from his eyes at Batman. I imagine if he could find a picture of Supes blasting a critic he would have used that one instead.

Superhero movies tend to accentuate the divide between critics and fans and rarely has the gap been wider and deeper than it is in the reaction to Batman v Superman.

The thing is, there shouldn't be a divide between professional moviegoers and fans. It's not Criticman v Fandom or Us v Them. We share a love of story, characters and images on screen. We may express our opinions differently, but as Devin Faraci pointed out recently, film critics are film critics because they are passionate about movies. Take Movies.com writer John Gholson for instance. In response to the blow back his negative review of the film received he tweeted, "If you think "I wanted to hate" BVS, you're out of your mind and the reason I'm still upset days later is because I wanted to LOVE it."

For sure there are critics who automatically dismiss superhero movies, or romantic comedies, or whatever your favourite genre. But no one forces you to read them. Choose your favourite film critic like you would a friend, someone who shares your enthusiasms, or challenges them, or whatever makes you happy.

The point is no one is holding Batman's grapple gun to your head making you read bad reviews of your fan favourites.

Better yet, take musician and social activist Jello Biafra's advice. "Don't hate the media," he said, "become the media." It's never been easier to express yourself publicly, whether it's on your own blog or social media but here's a pro tip: go see the movie before sharing your thoughts.

Not that reviews or blogs were going to make a great deal of difference to Batman v Superman's box office fate. Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst at comScore nailed it when he said, "Reviews don't matter. The Batsuit and Superman's cape are made of Teflon." The movie was review proof as evidenced by its 29 per cent Tomatometer score compared to its massive $166.1 million North American take.

TELEVISION

McDermott 'fearless' for new show

The last time viewers saw Dean McDermott on the small screen he was at one of the lowest points of his life.

On one hand he had been juggling hosting duties on Chopped Canada for two seasons. On the other he was baring his soul on reality series True Tori, attempting to reconcile his marriage to Tori Spelling following a public affair, and dealing with depression and suicidal thoughts.

As he debuts this Friday in Super Channel's horror series Slasher, he's very much a reassembled man.

"I'm in a really great place now with my sobriety and my headspace and my depression, and I just feel great and I feel ready," he says. "I just felt more open as an actor and as a person to sort of try new things and be fearless. I guess it's because I'd been through so much.

"I'd been dragged through the mud, I'd hit bottom. I was in a horrible place personally and so now being on set it was, I've been to hell and back, so nothing really throws me off my game now."

On Slasher, McDermott plays police chief Iain Vaughn, a seasoned vet who is none too pleased when the child of a couple brutally murdered in their home on Halloween returns to town decades later with her husband in tow.

"I'm an actor first and foremost, that's what I was for 20 years before I came to L.A. Then the reality thing just kind of fell in my lap and it was fun to run with for a while until it wasn't," McDermott explains. "I was so happy and blessed and grateful for the role on Slasher because it was time for me to get back to my first love of acting in scripted television."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

THE OTHER CHARACTERS

Sarah Bennett (Katie McGrath)
She was cut out of her mother's womb as a baby, but that isn't stopping her from moving back into the house where her parents were brutally murdered decades ago.

Dylan Bennett (Brandon Jay McLaren)
As the paper's new editor in chief, Dylan has access to all sorts of information. Information that will hopefully help his wife Sarah finally make peace with her horrifying past.

Cam Henry (Steve Byers)
As one of Sarah's childhood friends and potential adult crush, this officer is there as a moral support for his old bestie, but possibly something more as well.

Heather Peterson (Erin Karpluk)
The Being Erica and Rookie Blue star shows an entirely new side of herself in this deranged role, as a mentally unstable woman who may not be as unhinged as she first appears.

Dean McDermott plays police chief Iain Vaughan in the new horror series Slasher. CONTRIBUTED

Manage your spring allergy symptoms

We all look forward to the first signs of spring. Unfortunately for many Canadians, the sniffling, sneezing and watery eyes of annoying spring allergies can overshadow the enjoyment of the season.

The big trigger is pollen. As plants bloom and trees come to life, pollen is released into the air. We breathe in the pollen and our immune systems respond by sending antibodies to attack the allergens. This causes a release of chemicals called histamines into the blood, setting off allergic symptoms. Typically, the hotter and drier the weather, the more pollen is released. When wind picks up, pollen counts are higher because the wind carries it further. When it rains, the counts are lower as the water washes pollen away.

One way to help manage allergy symptoms is with over-the-counter remedies designed to reduce symptoms. Products fall into these general categories:

Antihistamines
These help to temporarily reduce sneezing, runny nose and itching by lowering the histamines your body produces. There are various formulations that do this: desloratadine (e.g., Aerius), loratadine (e.g., Claratin), cetirizine (e.g., Reactine) and sedatives (e.g., Benadryl). You may have to try different formulations to find the one that works best for you, but always make sure to read and follow the label.

YOUR ALLERGY ACTION PLAN

- Stay inside when pollen counts are highest: early in the day and when the weather is dry and windy.
- Keep doors and windows shut and regularly vacuum and dust your home.
- Use high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters if your home has forced-air heating or air conditioning.
- Wash your clothes and hair after you've spent time outside.
- Leave the lawn mowing and weeding to someone else in your family.

ISTOCK

Nasal sprays
These can help clear nasal passages. Some are decongestants, shrinking the blood vessels in the nasal passages to help relieve congestion for a few days only. As an alternative, a saline spray used to rinse and moisturize your nasal passages is a good choice (e.g., Hydrasense).

Anti-itch creams
Those with antihistamines (e.g., Benadryl) can help relieve itchy skin due to allergies.

Eye drops
Some eye drops contain an antihistamine that helps relieve itchy, watery eyes and a decongestant that can help relieve redness. Decongestants should not be used for more than a few days.

The medications mentioned in this article may not be right for you. Always read and follow the label before using and make sure to consult your health-care professional or your local Shoppers Drug Mart pharmacist to find the best solution for you.

Individual results may vary. This information is provided for education information purposes only. It is not designed or intended to constitute medical advice or to be used for diagnosis or to replace your Doctor. Consult your Pharmacist or Doctor to determine the appropriateness of the information for your specific situation.

metro TRAVEL
Your essential daily news

London takes best destination in TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice Awards

Kansas City, Kansas City here I come

MUSIC

Good music awaits in this city known for jazz and blues

Kansas City has a wide-open selection of bars to help the business traveller shake off that last meeting and down beverages poured from full-size bottles not found in the mini-bar.

There are also loads of taverns that aim to sully your gin and quiet with music — DJs, karaoke, a guy on a guitar.

And then there is the Blue Room, where patrons head when the need for good music pushes aside those lower-brain urges. You don't go to the Blue Room just to have a drink, chit chat or get rid of another night.

You go to the Blue Room to listen, and not in a background-fill-in-the-gaps kind of way, but in a "Hey — pay attention!" kind of way.

The Blue Room is a small two-tiered space adjoining Kansas City's American Jazz Museum in the Historic 18th & Vine Jazz District, a few miles from the hotels and convention locales of Crown Center, downtown and the Country Club Plaza. It's dark, the bar is stocked, the tables small.

On a recent Friday night, by 8:40 p.m., apart from a couple bar stools, the place was standing-room-only packed. The draw that night was the James Ward Band, a six-piece contemporary jazz group that hushed the crowd and set one gentleman in an oversized sport coat dancing alone in front of the bar.

Most everyone else sat quietly, drinks before them, heads facing forward, soaking it in. A few raised their voices and clinked glasses during the set, but they were a minority.

The Blue Room "is a working jazz club exhibit" that hosts veteran musicians and new bands, locals and the internationally known, said Christopher Burnett, marketing and communications manager for the American Jazz Museum. Ida McBeth makes regular appearances.

It's open Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings, with the last Monday of the month usually for big bands, and the last Thursday for Latin Jazz and Salsa. "We've got some pretty good Latin bands here in Kansas City, and they pack the place," Burnett said. "And, we have about a dozen big bands in Kansas City that are off the chain."

The Blue Room also holds a free jam session on Monday evenings where musicians of all skill levels can sit in with veterans. For the next trip to Kansas City, pack your sax.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IF YOU GO

The Blue Room: 1616 E. 18th St., Kansas City, Missouri; club.americanjazzmuseum.org. Open Mondays and Thursday, 5 p.m.-11 p.m. (entertainment starts at 7 p.m., admission free); Fridays, 5 p.m.- 1 a.m.; Saturdays, 7 p.m.-1 a.m. (entertainment Friday-Saturday begins 8:30 p.m. with $10 cover unless otherwise noted).

The Blue Room. ASSOCIATED PRESS

Area Museums: The American Jazz Museum and Negro Leagues Baseball Museum are located in the same building as the Blue Room. The museums are open Tuesday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Sundays noon-6 p.m.; combined tickets to both museums cost $15, adults, and $8, children 5-12, or for one museum, $10, adults, or $6, children.

Prices reflect applicable reductions, are subject to change without notice and cannot be combined with any other offer or promotion. Prices are in Canadian dollars, are valid for bookings made on April 1, 2016, apply to new bookings only and for departure dates as indicated. Prices are per person based on double occupancy, unless otherwise stated, from Toronto - Pearson International Airport in Economy class and include surcharges. Non-refundable. Limited quantity and subject to availability at time of booking. Further information available from a travel agent. Offers expire at 11:59 p.m. ET on the date indicated. Flights operated by Air Canada rouge. For applicable terms and conditions, consult www.aircanadavacations.com. TICO registration #50013537. ■ †Applicable to groups. Not applicable to kids (2-12 years old). 7-night stays only. Valid on select packages, room categories and departure dates between May 1 and October 31, 2016. Reduction is on base fare. ■ ®Air Canada Vacations is a registered trademark of Air Canada, used under license by Touram Limited Partnership, 1440 St. Catherine W., Suite 600, Montreal, QC. Visit www.aircanadavacations.com for up-to-date information.

A French-flavoured festival on bicycles

EXPLORING

See a new side of Montreal in this fest for all types of cyclists

Montreal puts the sizzle on its status as a cycling and cultural beehive with a bike festival running from May 29 to June 5.

It's anchored by a bicycle tour of the city-island that rivals New York's Five Boro Bike Tour cycling extravaganza in size, adds a distinctive French twist and shows Americans how very far their dollar can go in Canada these days.

Tour de l'Ile de Montreal is the iconic event for a bicycle-mad city that Joelle Sevigny of Velo Quebec, the province's bicycle association and festival organizer, calls "little Copenhagen in North America."

The festival is far from little. The Sunday tour on closed-off streets, on June 5, typically draws 25,000 people, and follows a Friday night ride that brings together 15,000 in good weather.

The classic Sunday ride is 50 kilometres with an "express" option for fast cyclists to leave before the mob. Shorter hops are part of the mix, as is a 100-kilometre ride that ventures beyond streets closed to traffic.

Tour la nuit, on the Friday night, takes cyclists 23 kilometres and invariably brings out plenty of bikers and spectators in goofy costumes with some wild homemade illumination on the bikes.

Tour de l'Ile de Montreal began in 1985 with 3,500 people and mushroomed as the cycling ethic took hold.

Cycling is a year-round form of commuting and recreation despite the bitter winters in a province that is home to Route Verte, the vast bike network that made Quebec the world's top cycling destination, according to National Geographic.

The Go Bike Montreal Festival opens May 29 with "metropolitan challenge" rides in the countryside. The main Sunday ride costs $30.50 to $41 for an adult, depending when booked.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IF YOU GO
Montreal Bike Festival
May 29 to June 5
velo.qc.ca for more information

The Go Bike Montreal Festival typically brings out 15,000 people for a night ride and 25,000 for the main event. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CYCLING

Montreal's F1 circuit opens 2 weeks early

It was built for Formula One race cars, but the Circuit Gilles-Villeneuve in Parc Jean-Drapeau on Notre Dame Island is used much more by slower-moving traffic: cyclists, in-line skaters, joggers and walkers.

The shortage of snow this winter has allowed the park to clear the 4 1/3-kilometre track route of debris and open it in late March, two weeks earlier than last year. Pylons are set up to separate lanes dedicated to recreation and to regular cars, which are limited to 30 kilometres per hour.

Visitors can rent bikes and Segways at the Ecorecreo rental centre near the entrance of the circuit at the Cosmos Bridge. The track gets about 180,000 recreational users each year.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

TRAVEL NOTES ROMAN TREASURE, NINJAS AND CUBAN CRUISING

Roman treasure gets first showing
Hidden for decades, one of the world's greatest collections of ancient Roman statues is finally to go on public display. The works are held by the Torlonia family, one of Rome's oldest dynasties. Under the deal, between 60 and 90 of the works will be displayed in Rome in the second half of 2017. The bulk of the collection has spent decades in the basement of a family palace in central Rome after Prince Alessandro Torlonia converted the building into a 90-flat condominium. AFP

Villa Torlonia, where the works were kept. AFP

Japanese region seeks ninjas
Hundreds of aspiring ninjas from abroad have overwhelmed tourism officials in Japan looking to hire six full-time secret assassins, massively outnumbering local applicants. Central Japan's Aichi prefecture is hiring a troupe of ninjas to promote tourism. In an ad published last month, the prefecture said candidates of any nationality were welcome. Weeks later more than 200 applications were sent to the prefecture, with 85 per cent coming from foreigners. AFP

Japan's Aichi prefecture. ISTOCK

Carnival to set sail for Cuba in May
The world's largest cruise line is getting approval from Cuba to start running "cultural exchange" trips to the island starting in May. A 704-passenger ship will initially visit ports in Havana, Cienfuegos and Santiago de Cuba. Guests must spend at least eight hours each day involved in some type of cultural experience. Prices for the seven-day voyages start at $1,800 per person.

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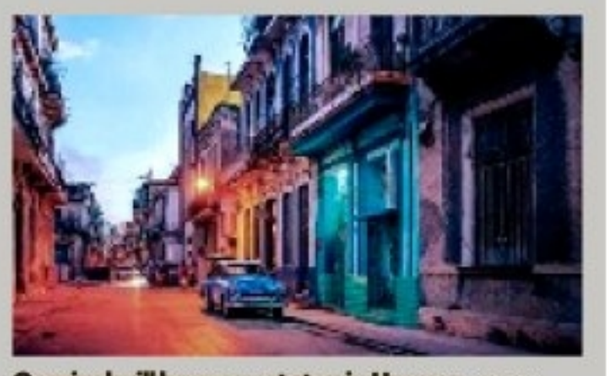

Carnival will have a port stop in Havana. ISTOCK

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Exploring the sea cliffs of Molokai

HAWAII

Island's natural beauty elevates it above past

A visit to the island of Molokai offers a window on a unique and tragic chapter of Hawaiian history.

For about a century beginning in 1866, some 8,000 individuals afflicted with leprosy were quarantined to live out their lives on the remote Kalaupapa Peninsula on Molokai's northern shores. Their stories are told at Kalaupapa National Historical Park.

About 100 people still live in the community, mostly government workers along with a few patients who chose to stay after the quarantine policy officially ended in 1969. Unless you're invited by a resident, you can only visit the park on a guided tour with a permit.

There are several options for getting there. One is booking through Makani Kai Charter Tours, which includes a flight from Honolulu to the main airport at Molokai, a bus tour of the park plus lunch, and a return flight from a tiny open-air airport inside the park.

Before the park tour, go for a hike down Kalaupapa's steep sea cliffs. From Molokai's mountaintop airport, it's a 15-minute taxi ride.

If there is a mule ride at the same time, you might be asked to head out first as the trail narrows in some spots and the mules make it tougher to navigate.

A wild goat appears along the trail leading to Molokai's Kalaupapa Peninsula in Hawaii. Once a quarantined community for people with leprosy, the island's park can only be visited through guided tour with a permit or by a resident's invitation.

MARCO GARCIA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

At 1,664 feet up, the mountaintop offers incredible views of the Kalaupapa Peninsula —even if you run into what locals refer to as volcanic smog.

As you begin the roughly three-mile hike, you might catch loud choruses of tropical birds and a few glimpses of the ocean rumbling below at spots where the thick foliage thinned out. Tiny flowers and moss-covered rocks can be seen on the way down, and colourful plants abound along with guava, noni and Brazilian pepper trees heavy with red bundles of peppercorns.

Wild goats can sometimes be spotted quietly munching on the noni fruit, also known as Indian mulberry.

Needless to say, there's no cell service here, and hikers must bring their own snacks and water.

As mules use the trail daily, mule droppings are found at every turn.

That aside, the hike is generally a peaceful one with hardly anyone else on the trail.

During the bus tour, you will visit structures built in the late 1800s by St. Damien, the Belgian priest who devoted himself to the colony and was eventually canonized, and will also see the gravesite of St. Marianne, the nun who cared for female patients of the colony and who also was made a saint.

Guides might point out an ancient Hawaiian altar called a heiau, and you will visit two turn-of-the-20th century churches still in use.

Some of St. Damien's remains are interred at St. Philomena Church.

Along the way there are deer, wild pigs and dozens of feral, but friendly, cats who are accustomed to being fed by the bus driver.

Before flying out, picnic on a blustery field overlooking the peninsula's rough waters.

As you stare into the sea, you can contemplate that ships once anchored here to unload passengers who would never leave this beautiful locale.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DESTINATION

More visitors come to Hawaii, Tourism authority says

The Hawaii Tourism Authority says the number of visitors to the islands rose 4.1 per cent last month compared to February last year. Spending by travellers climbed 4.8 per cent.

The figures were boosted by having an extra day in February, because this year is a leap year.

The agency said Tuesday average daily spending also rose, but by 1.2 per cent.

Overall tourist traffic was close to flat on an average daily basis. More than 218,000 visitors were in the state last month on an average day. That's 0.4 per cent lower than the same month last year.

The agency says fewer cruise ship arrivals held down arrivals and spending. Only two ships visited the islands compared to six ships last February.

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ATTRACTION

Glass tower slide set to thrill Los Angeles

The latest Los Angeles thrill ride has arrived — a glass slide that will jut from a skyscraper 1,000 feet above the ground.

A helicopter brought the Skyslide to the 69th floor of the downtown U.S. Bank Tower last month. At 72 stories, it is the tallest building west of the Mississippi.

When it opwwens on June 25, the transparent, 45-foot-long slide will carry visitors from floors 70 to 69 as they peer down through 1 1/4-inch-thick glass.

"The Skyslide boasts a safe, thrilling experience unlike any other in the world," said a statement from Lucy Rumantir, head of U.S. operations for building owner OUE Limited of Singapore. "Guests of all ages will have the opportunity to transform their view of Los Angeles as they glide down, gazing at unparalleled views of the city."

Skyslide is part of a $50 million renovation that will also put an open-air observation deck and bar on the tower's top floors. The slide ends at the observation deck.

On a clear day, the tower provides panoramic views that extend to Catalina Island 35 kilometres off the Pacific Coast and over the Santa Monica Mountains to the city's sprawling San Fernando Valley.

The slide will cost $8 and admission to the observation deck will be $25. Tickets are being sold online.

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An artist rendering of the Skyslide. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

More to Washington than the White House

AMERICA

Dupont Circle area known for its art, quirky attractions

The National Mall, a look at the White House and cherry blossoms in springtime are all musts for visitors to Washington, D.C.

But once you've got the essentials covered, consider spending a few hours in Dupont Circle, a neighbourhood with gems that range from a popular indie bookstore to a beer brewer's Victorian mansion. The area also includes a gas station on the National Register of Historic Places and the Phillips Collection, a modern art museum.

Take the Metro to the Dupont Circle stop and look for a white marble fountain in a circular plaza. That's the centre of the neighbourhood. Streets extend out from the circle like spokes on a wheel.

This gas station is on the National Register of Historic Places. It was built in 1936 to look more like a bank or library than a filling station. BETH J. HARPAZ/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Attractions

The Phillips Collection, 1600 21st St., is probably Dupont Circle's best-known attraction. Through May 8, Seeing Nature offers 39 paintings from five centuries, including Impressionist works and David Hockney's large, colourful 1998 depiction of the Grand Canyon. In the museum's permanent collection, be sure to see Renoir's lively Luncheon of the Boating Party.

The Heurich House Museum, billed as "the brewmaster's castle," is a 31-room home at 1307 New Hampshire Ave., built in the 1890s by Christian Heurich, a German-born beer-maker. Heurich was best known for his Senate brand of beer. He survived Prohibition by temporarily turning his beer business into an ice-distribution company, and he was still making beer when he died in 1945 at age 102. The Kennedy Center sits on the land where his factory was located.

Dupont Circle is also home to many embassies. On one block, a white statue of Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of knowledge, graces the Indonesian embassy, while the flag of Portugal flies from the embassy next door.

Two curiosities in the neighbourhood: Spanish Steps, a flight of stone stairs at S Street and 22nd Street named for the famous steps in Rome, and a gas station on the National Register of Historic Sites at 2200 P St. across from Rock Creek Park. The gas station was built in 1936 by Gulf Oil to look more like a bank or library than a filling station. It's a Sunoco station today, with "SNACK SHOP" written on the tidy building that helped earn its historic designation.

Shopping and dining

Connecticut Avenue has lots of small, fun shops, including for dog owners, The Cheeky Puppy, 1709 Connecticut Ave.; for women's clothing and accessories, lou lou boutiques, a regional chain with stores at 1601 and 1623 Connecticut Ave.; and beads at Beadazzled, 1507 Connecticut.

On the second floor of 1702 Connecticut Ave., the Secondi consignment store sells designer finds, ranging from a DVF wrap dress for $98 to a Chanel coat for more than $1,000. Second Story Books & Antiques, 2000 P St., draws treasure-hunters with its outdoor carts of $4 books, while Kramerbooks & Afterwords Cafe, 1517 Connecticut Ave., draws crowds on weekends for both books and brunch (try the Cubano sandwich and black bean salad).

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SPONSORED CONTENT *VIRGINIA*

CUISINE AND COUTURE IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA

Local shopping and dining are "a unique blend of city and country."

AWARD-WINNING RESTAURANTS AND ARTISANAL SHOPS ABOUND IN COSMOPOLITAN NORTHERN VIRGINIA. **CONTRIBUTED**

Northern Virginia is considered the hip and cosmopolitan side of the state, rich in crave-worthy cuisine and chic shopping. Next door to the United States' capital, this cultural region of Virginia attracts people from all over the world, creating distinctive food and fashion scenes.

Here, you can indulge in globally inspired dishes at award-winning restaurants or purchase handmade goodies to take home (if they last that long), from artisanal chocolates and cheeses to local coffee and spirits.

"You name the country, I guarantee we have the cuisine," says Cara O'Donnell, spokesperson for Arlington Convention and Visitors Service. "I made a whole A-Z list."

There's also a focus on locally grown and sourced ingredients, and plenty of chef-driven restaurants and purveyors of artisanal products.

Cheesetique in Alexandria and Arlington is not your traditional wine and cheese bar. It serves grown-up grilled cheese sandwiches complemented with Virginia wine; its mac 'n' cheese has been named one of the best in the U.S., and can be elevated with a Cambozola sauce, roasted tomatoes and hunks of bacon.

Nearby in Arlington is Artisan Confections, which specializes in handmade chocolates using high-quality ingredients, from French Valrhona chocolate to organic mint grown on a Maryland farm.

Over in Alexandria, there's a growing culinary scene that offers everything from casual eateries and markets to fine dining. In warm weather, there's plenty of al fresco dining in this pretty waterside town, with its patios, courtyards and sidewalk cafés.

The region also offers some of the best shopping in the country, from antique shops and art galleries to funky independent boutiques, high-end gallerias and budget outlet malls – not to mention the more than 300 stores at Tysons Corner Center, one of the largest shopping centres in the country.

Head to Leesburg to browse its charming antique shops, or peruse the art galleries in historic Occoquan for a one-of-a-kind find. Stroll historic King Street in Alexandria for dozens of independent shops in the Old Town Boutique District. There's luxury shopping at Fashion Centre at Pentagon City and Tysons Galleria in Fairfax County — considered the Rodeo Drive of the East Coast — and find big names at Leesburg Corner Premium Outlets & Potomac Mills Mall, the largest outlet mall in Virginia.

"There's a unique blend of city and country here," says O'Donnell. "You've got a real urban feel with the shopping centres, but drive a few miles away and you're in horse country with wineries, art galleries and antique shops."

And shoppers can save more of their travel dollars for dining and shopping in Northern Virginia, she says, since hotel pricing is at least 20 per cent less than across the state line in Washington, D.C. — a bonus for Canadian visitors.

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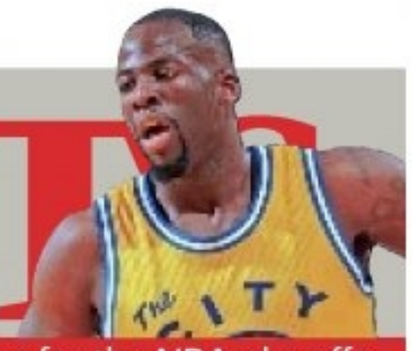

"It is something we want to do": Draymond Green whose 68-7 Warriors will go for a record 73 wins instead of resting for the NBA playoffs

Toronto Blue Jays third baseman Josh Donaldson has spread his infectious positivity throughout the team's camp this spring. STEVE RUSSELL/TORONTO STAR

The bringer of the reign

BLUE JAYS

Donaldson's spirit key as Jays set out to defend crown

Josh Donaldson would announce his presence loudly each morning by blaring tunes from the Bluetooth speaker at his locker. Later, the reigning American League MVP would take the music with him to workouts and batting practice, where he'd offer tips and talk hitting with rookies and veterans alike.

Donaldson, the Blue Jays' all-star third baseman, set the tone from the moment he arrived at camp this spring. The team is counting on him, and other veterans, to maintain the rare clubhouse chemistry that was a big part of Toronto's breakout 2015 season.

"I don't think that happens everywhere where a team's superstar is so willing to help," said second baseman Ryan Goins, who's added a leg kick in his approach at the plate to mimic Donaldson's. "JD, (Jose) Bautista, Tulo (Troy Tulowitzki), Eddie (Edwin Encarnacion), they're all like that. The proof of it is in the pudding last year. You could feel something special in how we acted with each other. Everyone felt like the person next to them had their back."

For the first time since 1994, the Blue Jays open play as defending AL East champions.

While their post-season ended earlier than they wanted it to — they lost in six games to Kansas City in the AL Championship Series — the core of that group is returning for 2016, and they're closer than ever.

Donaldson has had a lot to do with that, continually fostering clubhouse chemistry by making everyone feel welcome.

He began one of his first days in camp by tossing a football around with newcomer Domonic Brown. Later he was spotted with Brown in the batting cages hours after workouts had ceased for the day.

"It was pretty impressive," manager John Gibbons said. "I hadn't seen anything like it before. One thing they do is they really help coach each other, and that's the ideal situation. You don't get that too often."

Toronto's core players saw each other frequently during the off-season. They met in Vegas for a UFC fight and convened at Bautista's for a onesie-themed Super Bowl party.

Donaldson said he's a "big believer" in the chemistry the team has developed.

"Some people are for it, some say it's a non-factor but if you could have seen our clubhouse from the beginning of last season to the end of it you would definitely understand," he said.

"You have teams that just show up to the ballpark and you have teams where guys look forward to showing up and being around the guys. When you have that, when you have 25 guys on the same page, now it becomes fun and you start having success. It's a special group."

Even players who weren't part of last season's team agree. Canadian left-hander and former Minnesota Twin Scott Diamond, who signed in November, was amazed at how quickly he felt included.

"I thought the Twins always had a tight knit group but it's not even comparable to this," said Diamond, who's since been relegated to minor league camp. "Usually there's separation between pitchers and position players and you don't see that at all here. That's the basis for a great team chemistry and they've got it."

Toronto opens the season Sunday in Tampa Bay with right-hander Marcus Stroman on the mound. The 24-year-old has made it clear he intends to fill the role of the staff ace left vacant when trade-deadline acquisition David Price signed a free-agent deal with Boston.

Rounding out the rotation is R.A. Dickey, J.A. Happ and Aaron Sanchez, who beat out Gavin Floyd, Jesse Chavez and Drew Hutchison for the contested fifth spot. Marco Estrada (back) will start the year on the disabled list.

This season will be the first under the new front-office regime of president Mark Shapiro and GM Ross Atkins, after the departure of popular Alex Anthopoulos and president Paul Beeston. It could prove pivotal, with sluggers Bautista and Encarnacion set to become free agents at the end of the year.

The Blue Jays finished 2015 with 93 wins, their most since the 1993 World Series season, to win the AL East and break a 22-year playoff drought.

"We had a pretty good attitude last year and I think that started with Russell Martin and Donaldson — they brought some toughness and energy and a lot of focus," Gibbons said. "But yeah, we feel good. We've got that monkey off our back, to win a division. There's definitely a good feeling."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

> **When you have that, 25 guys on the same, now it becomes fun and you have success.**
> Josh Donaldson

$24.99

The Toronto Blue Jays broadcaster and NHL rights holder is launching a live streaming service called Sportsnet NOW. Canadians will no longer have to subscribe to a cable or satellite package to watch all the content now available on the six Sportsnet TV channels. A subscription will cost $24.99 per month.

IN BRIEF

Philly says sorry to Jackie

Philadelphia is officially apologizing to Jackie Robinson for the racism he faced in the City of Brotherly Love.

The city council passed a resolution Thursday naming April 15 as a day to honour Robinson's achievements and to apologize for his mistreatment while visiting Philadelphia in 1947. April 15 is the day Robinson broke the colour barrier.

In Philadelphia, Robinson was refused service by a local hotel and taunted by Phillies manager Ben Chapman, who, along with players, hurled racial slurs at Robinson.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Miller to play through pain

New York Yankees reliever Andrew Miller plans to pitch with a broken wrist in his glove hand. Miller sustained a chip fracture of his right wrist Wednesday when hit by a line drive off the bat of Atlanta's Willians Astudillo.

"I think I can work around it," Miller said Thursday before the Yankees played St. Louis. "I'm not too worried, it's my right hand. I have some swelling, some soreness. All things considered, better than I expected."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sandoval benched by Sox

Pablo Sandoval has become a $95 million bench player. The Boston Red Sox announced before their final spring training game Thursday that Travis Shaw, a 25-year-old who made his big league debut last May, will be their starting third baseman. Sandoval hit .245 last season with 10 homers and 47 RBIs.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rays stumble in finale

Matt Joyce, Francisco Cervelli and Sean Rodriguez homered in the first two innings as the Pittsburgh Pirates scorched the Rays 13-8 at on Thursday in Tampa's final tune-up before Sunday's season-opener against the Jays. Jake Odorizzi was charged with eight runs and six hits in one-plus inning.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Leafs' losing ways in Buffalo continue

NHL

Young Buds add to string of bad results against Sabres

Cal O'Reilly and Johan Larsson each scored twice and the Buffalo Sabres extended their home dominance over the Toronto Maple Leafs with a 4-1 victory Thursday night.

Buffalo built a 3-0 lead and Larsson capped Buffalo's seventh straight home win over Toronto by scoring into an empty net in a meeting of two Atlantic Division rivals who have already been eliminated from playoff contention. The Sabres also improved to 17-1-1 in their past 19 home games against Toronto in a run that dates to Feb. 4, 2009.

Brooks Laich scored for Toronto and Tobias Lindberg set up the goal in his NHL debut. The Maple Leafs acquired Lindberg in a multi-player deal that sent captain Dion Phaneuf to Ottawa last month.

Chad Johnson made 25 saves for Buffalo.

The loss left the Maple Leafs at the bottom of the NHL standings with five games remaining in their season.

Larsson opened the scoring 7:09 in before the Maple Leafs managed their first shot on net. Driving in on the right wing, Larsson used defenceman Morgan Rielly as a screen and snapped a shot that beat Garret Sparks high on the short side.

Jack Eichel, left, set up Cal O'Reilly for a goal in the Sabres' win over the Leafs on Thursday night. GARY WIEPERT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

THURSDAY in Buffalo

SABRES	LEAFS
4	1

Buffalo struck again with a power-play goal with 19 seconds left in the period, when Jack Eichel patiently waited in the left circle and set up O'Reilly driving through the middle, where he wristed a shot inside the left post.

The Maple Leafs were outshot 9-0 before getting their first puck on net with 8:04 left in the first period.

O'Reilly capped the Sabres' surge 3:41 into the second period. He sped up the left wing and beat defencemen T.J. Brennan and Jake Gardiner to the puck that Buffalo's David Legwand cleared from his own zone. O'Reilly leaned into his shot at the left circle and blasted it past Sparks.

Lindberg made a no-look pass from the end boards to set up Laich in front for Toronto's goal 13:32 into the second period.

The Sabres had a goal disallowed with 2:43 left in the second period. Mark Pysyk scored on a shot from the left point, but referee Kendrick Nicholson waved it off by ruling there was incidental contact between Sparks and Sabres forward Hudson Fasching. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KEY BISCAYNE KYRGIOS TOPS MILOS No. 24 Nick Kyrgios reached his first ATP Masters 1000 semifinal on Thursday night by beating No. 12 Milos Raonic of Thornhill in a Miami Open matchup of big servers, 6-4, 7-6 (4). CLIVE BRUNSKILL/GETTY IMAGES

IN BRIEF

Canada playoff-less for first time since 1970

It's rare — and almost unthinkable for hockey fans — but the Stanley Cup playoffs will go ahead without any Canadian teams.

The Ottawa Senators were the last club to be eliminated on Wednesday night, despite beating the Winnipeg Jets 2-1. The Philadelphia Flyers' 2-1 shootout win over the Washington Capitals mathematically eliminated the Sens. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Cavs 2-1/2 games in front of Raps after topping Nets

LeBron James scored 24 points to move into 12th place on the NBA's career scoring list, and the Cleveland Cavaliers defeated the Brooklyn Nets 107-87 on Thursday night.

James passed Dominique Wilkins with a three-point play in the first quarter. The four-time MVP, who didn't play in the fourth quarter, has 26,689 career points.

Kevin Love added 19 points for Cleveland (53-22), which leads Toronto by 2-1/2 games for the top seed in the Eastern Conference. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Crowds gather for glimpse of Canadian teen Henderson

Canadian Brooke Henderson had by far the most fans following her around for the first round of the ANA Inspiration on Thursday in Rancho Mirage, Calif.

The 18-year-old from Smiths Falls, Ont., opened with a 1-over 73 and was six shots behind leader Ai Miyazato after the morning session. She is making her second start at Mission Hills after tying for 26th in the major championship as an amateur in 2014. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HOUSTON OPEN

Hoff starts off red-hot

Charley Hoffman birdied half the holes on the Golf Club of Houston course Thursday and had just a single bogey to shoot an 8-under-par 64 and take the first-round lead of the Shell Houston Open, putting himself in contention to claim the final spot in next week's Masters.

But the hard work lies ahead for Hoffman. The three-time PGA Tour winner from San Diego hasn't held up well on the weekends this season after giving himself good opportunities to claim titles. Closing 75s in his last two stroke-play tournaments even knocked him out of likely top-10 finishes.

Charley Hoffman GETTY IMAGES

"I've shot 3- or 4-over on the back nine on Sunday when I've been going from winning the golf tournament to 12th or 15th place," Hoffman said. "I've played fairly solidly from the start of the year to now and haven't been missing cuts, but I haven't been able to put four rounds together. Hopefully I can do that this week."

Hoffman birdied the first four holes of his back nine — the course's front nine — then added another birdie on No. 8 to break out of what had been a four-way tie for first place with Dustin Johnson, Roberto Castro and Scott Brown, who all shot 65s.

"You always want to get off to a good start in any tournament," Johnson said. "Today I got off to a great start. I still feel like I'm playing really solid, rolling the putter good." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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RECIPE Chicken Chili Tacos

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

This recipe will be your newest obsession for so many reasons (easy, fast, inexpensive) but the main reason we make it all time is because it's just so darn delicious.

Ready in
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 8 hours

Ingredients
- 6 boneless, skinless chicken thighs
- 1 1/2 cups prepared pico de gallo or salsa
- 1/4 cup fresh lime juice (about 1 1/2 limes)
- 2 teaspoons cumin seeds, lightly toasted
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 12 taco shells (crisp or soft/flour or corn)

Directions

1. Place chicken, pico de gallo or salsa, lime juice, cumin seeds and garlic in a slow cooker and stir to combine. Cover and cook on low for 6 hours. (You can also cook on high for 3 hours.)

2. Allow to cool a bit. Scoop the chicken out with a big slotted spoon and place it in a large serving bowl. Use two forks to pull the meat apart. The chicken will shred easily. Stir in some cooking juice from the pot and top with the cilantro.

3. Place the shredded chicken, your taco shells and desired fixings on the table and let everyone put together their perfect taco.

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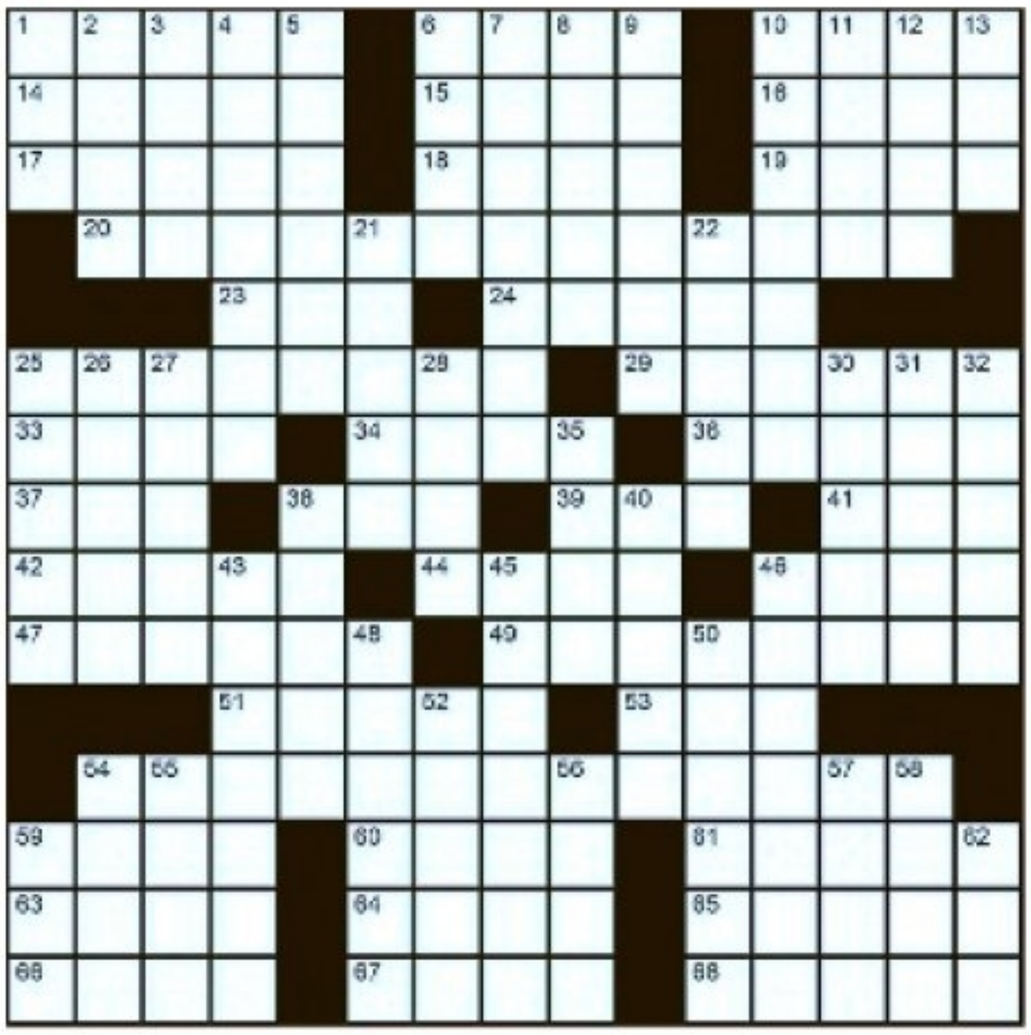
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Soooo 2015
6. PEI export, cutely
10. Superior at a French monastery
14. Tropical greeting
15. Other
16. Extra
17. Get rid of mist
18. German industrial region
19. Adjective's follower
20. Eugene Levy's anchorman character on "SCTV": 2 wds.
23. "__ for two and me for..."
24. Botanical casings
25. Bedding
29. Earthquakes
33. Genesis brother
34. Call for
36. Toronto __ Centre
37. Poultry product
38. Beaufort __
39. Un-new
41. Historic time
42. Jacket sported by a '60s rocker
44. Former currency in Italy
46. Apex
47. Bury
49. The despairing masses in Victor Hugo's Les Miserables
51. Perhaps
53. Ms. Jillian
54. Oh, God! Jim Carrey comedy of 2003: 2 wds.
59. Umpire's call about a ball!
60. Hillside
61. Sophia of 2009's "Nine"
63. In __ of (Replacing)
64. Cravings
65. Upper crust
66. Alberta town
67. Scandinavian story
68. Resign

DOWN
1. Suit shoulder insert
2. Helm position
3. TV-watcher's spot
4. Abbreviate
5. Bird of Jove's baby
6. Follower of 'Que' twice, in song
7. Feathering
8. Movies attendant
9. Skin layer
10. John Doe's memory loss
11. Barbarian
12. Very dry, as per champagne
13. 'Velvet' suffix
21. "The __ Mutiny" (1954)
22. Rolling Stones album of 1969: 'Let It __'
25. Panorama
26. Tom __ (Robert Duvall's character in 'Godfather' movies)
27. After __ (Mints)
28. Oscar-winner Patricia
30. "__ Magnolias" (1989)
31. The __ of the story...
32. Cobra, for one
35. "__ the Explorer"
38. Shrub variety
40. Hawaiian-style veranda
43. Twin brother of Remus in ancient Roman mythology
45. Reykjavik's realm
46. Puny puncture
48. "Ta ta!": 2 wds.
50. Fished
52. Divulged
54. Swelter
55. Bemoaned
56. Raised flatland
57. Clip
58. Fabled snow creature
59. Andy Capp's wife
62. Clear

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
This is a good day to count your blessings, and one of the biggest blessings for Aries this year is that you can improve your job. You also can improve your health.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
This year, more than a decade in the past and a decadent future, you have the best chance to enjoy vacations — a major vacation or a series of little getaways.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
This is an excellent year to benefit from real-estate deals. You will improve your home life and all your family relationships.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
A positive state of mind is the secret of happiness. And this is what you have in spades this year. It's easy to be optimistic!

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
You can earn more money this year, which is good news for your sign — you like to spend big. You'll be laughing all the way to the bank.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
With lucky Jupiter in your sign now, life couldn't be better. Of course, nothing is perfect, because it never is. But you have the advantage now over all the other signs.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Your spiritual life will be more important now for a number of reasons. Welcome this opportunity to be introspective and come to terms with what really matters in life.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
This is such a popular year for you! Enjoy meeting new friends. And enjoy joining clubs, groups and organizations. Remember: Your relations with others will benefit you this year.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
This is the perfect year to put your name up in lights. It's easy to impress others, because they see you in such positive terms. (Milk this for all it's worth

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Grab every opportunity to travel, because you want to expand your horizons this year. This is also a good year for publishing, the media and higher education.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Gifts, goodies and the wealth of others will benefit you this year. Keep your pockets open and enjoy this advantage.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
This is a wonderful year for relationships for you. In fact, this is the best year in over a decade for Pisces people to get married. Oh my.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

5						3		6
			7		9			
1				2				
	2						9	
		9		5		1		
	3						5	
				1				2
			6		4			
4		7						3

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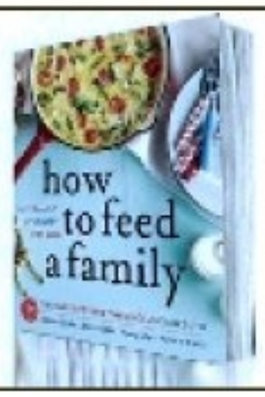

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Your daily crossword and Sudoku answers from the play page.

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2	7	9	6	1	8	4	3	5
5	3	1	7	4	9	2	6	8
4	6	8	3	2	5	1	7	9
1	4	6	2	9	3	5	8	7
3	5	2	1	8	7	9	4	6
8	9	7	5	6	4	3	1	2
6	2	4	8	5	1	7	9	3
9	8	3	4	7	2	6	5	1
7	1	5	9	3	6	8	2	4

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